# MAINE PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT NETWORK SYSTEM



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\*\*ADVISORY - Important Information \*\*

# 2009PHADV027

TO: All Maine Health Alert Network Recipients

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**SUBJECT:** Maine CDC Update on Novel Influenza A (H1N1)

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# Maine CDC Update on H1N1 June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2009

# **Summary:**

What a momentous week it is has been to be in public health!

- Congress is giving oversight of our biggest underlying killer, tobacco, to the FDA (Food and Drug Administration).
- Maine enacted several ground-breaking pieces of legislation, including several that close some remaining loopholes in workplace and public place smoking laws (such as state beaches) and one that will mean some chain restaurants will be providing calories on the menu boards.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) declared H1N1 to be a phase 6 pandemic. Since this designation reflects the worldwide spread of H1N1 and Maine has had cases of H1N1 since late April, this designation does not change our strategies.

The purpose of this health advisory is to provide an update on H1N1 as well as links to new or focused planning and clinical resources.

H1N1 continues to spread in Maine, especially in the southern and Mid Coast areas. Although we have an overall total of 44 cases confirmed by testing in Maine (35 among Maine residents and 9 among those visiting or staying in Maine) it is important to note that individual case data are useful only in that they are markers of the presence of H1N1 in a given county or geographical area. Many people with H1N1 are not tested (such as symptomatic close contacts of confirmed cases or people with mild illness), and their illness is not reflected in the case counts. Counties or regions with no reported cases may still be affected.

#### **Some Highlights from This Last Week:**

- 2/3 of those confirmed with H1N1 since late April in Maine are under the age of 40, confirming the higher spread seen nationally among children and young adults.
- 3/4 of confirmed cases are from Cumberland or York Counties, though there has been a recent increase in cases along the Mid Coast area of northern Cumberland County, Sagadahoc, Lincoln, and Knox Counties.
- There have been a total of 3 Maine people hospitalized for H1N1; two have been discharged and one remains hospitalized.
- Three confirmed recent cases are from two different summer camps, and with an expected influx of counselors and campers, this setting is an important one for prevention and mitigation.
- Several students at different K-12 schools in the Mid Coast and southern Maine areas tested positive the past two weeks.
- Cumberland County Jail clinical and administrative staff are commended for their swift action in detecting and mitigating an outbreak of H1N1. A total of seven cases among inmates were detected (not all were tested), and there have been no new ones in the week after isolation and antiviral strategies were implemented.
- Several new cases have a common history of travel to other areas of New England, such as the Greater Boston area, or visits from relatives from these areas, emphasizing that vigilant respiratory hygiene is important in these situations.
- As the infection spreads we expect to see some increase in severity, as has been seen in other states.

## **Focused Recommendations Based on These Highlights:**

- The strategies recommended the last few weeks continue to be very important.
- It is especially important for those convening or attending any type of gathering (family reunions or BBQs, weddings, parties, conferences, etc) to make sure the tools and reminders are readily

- available for people to maintain respiratory etiquette. Examples include soap/water, hand sanitizer, tissues, and reminder posters.
- Although there have been no sustained school outbreaks identified and some schools are adjourning soon for the summer, we still ask that schools, especially in affected areas, monitor their absentee rates, and if an increase in absenteeism is reported by parents to be due to influenza like illness (ILI), then Maine CDC should be contacted for further guidance. Parents reporting an absence should be asked if it is due to an ILI (fever plus respiratory symptoms such as a cough or sore throat).
- Priority areas for outreach include settings in which young people live in close quarters. These settings include youth camps, homeless and domestic violence shelters, correctional facilities, and cruises. See guidance resources for these settings below.
- Preparations for large scale seasonal influenza and H1N1 vaccine administration for this fall should be starting. See resources below.

## **H1N1 Data Updates:**

Maine http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/swine-flu-2009.shtml

The Maine CDC public health laboratory (HETL) has performed about 2,100 influenza tests this past month with PCR technology, and is now confirming

H1N1 subtyping.

New England 2,009 confirmed cases and 2 deaths as of June 12, 2009

(1,153 in MA; 637 in CT – 2 deaths; 92 in NH; 62 in RI; 32 in VT)

For updates from Massachusetts: http://publichealth.blog.state.ma.us/h1n1-

swine-flu/

U.S. 17,855 confirmed cases, all 50 states have seen cases, over 1,600

hospitalizations, and 45 deaths. .cdc.gov/h1n1flu/

International WHO at http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/en/index.html

WHO raised the level of the influenza pandemic alert from a phase 5 to a phase 6 on June 11, 2009. 74 countries have officially reported almost 30,000 cases,

including 145 deaths.

#### **Basic Resources:**

Because recommendations from U.S. CDC are being updated very frequently, we strongly urge clinicians, school officials, and others to review the most updated guidance before making clinical or other decisions. We will not be issuing a health advisory for every update. There are several resources for information:

- The U.S. CDC's website can be found at: <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1/">http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1/</a>
- Maine CDC's website has Maine-specific information, including daily updates and links to federal information. It is located at: http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/swine-flu-2009.shtml and is also found through the Maine CDC's homepage: www.mainepublichealth.gov
- Maine Department of Education's website has resources and information for schools and parents. It can be found at: http://www.maine.gov/education/hlnl/index.html
- Health care providers or school officials needing updated clinical guidance should call Maine CDC's 24-hour clinical consultation line (1-800-821-5821). This is also the resource to report a suspected case and obtain testing information including expediting the transportation of samples for testing.
- Maine CDC's Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory (HETL) will perform influenza RT-PCR tests and sub-typing for influenza A positive specimens. Instructions on collecting and

submitting laboratory diagnostic specimens for H1N1 influenza testing are available at <a href="http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/etl/micro/submitting">http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/etl/micro/submitting</a> samples.htm

• The public information line with questions about H1N1 may also call our information support line at 1-888-257-0990 weekdays from 9am to 5pm.

# **Overall Strategies:**

The overall goal of Maine's efforts to address H1N1 is to minimize its impact in our state. Strategies to slow the spread of this infection include:

- Having easily available tools (soap/water, hand sanitizer, tissues, reminder posters, etc) for
  maintaining respiratory etiquette in workplaces, schools, daycares, social events, and wherever
  people are gathered;
- Isolating people with symptoms such as a fever and respiratory symptoms (whether they have had a test for influenza or not);
- Isolating appropriate household contacts;
- Encouraging people at high-risk for complications to take precautions;
- Appropriately using antiviral medications;
- Implementing other community mitigation strategies such as closures and cancellations when appropriate.

All of the above strategies can: delay the peak of the disease in order to "buy time" for the production and distribution of a vaccine against this new virus; decrease the number of people who get sick from this virus in a given community, thus reducing any surge on healthcare systems; and reduce the total number of people who get sick or die.

Because H1N1 is now found to be circulating in many parts of the globe, including places in the southern hemisphere where the time for seasonal influenza is beginning, we also need to prepare for what could be a more severe fall and winter with seasonal influenza since both H1N1 and seasonal influenza viruses could be circulating simultaneously. Such preparations include:

- Reviewing successes and lessons learned from the last few weeks and adjusting one's pandemic influenza plans appropriately;
- Reviewing and adjusting one's pandemic plans for a higher severity index; and
- Preparing for large scale vaccinations, for both seasonal influenza vaccine and H1N1 vaccine.

## The most important strategies to minimize H1N1's impact in Maine continue to be:

- Maintain vigilant **respiratory etiquette**:
  - o Cover coughs and sneezes with sleeves or a tissue;
  - o Wash hands frequently with soap and water or hand sanitizer;
  - o Avoid close contact with sick people;
  - Stay home if you are ill, and if you have an influenza-like illness symptoms (fever and a sore throat or cough), stay home for 7 days after symptoms begin or until you have been symptom-free for 24 hours, whichever is longer;
  - o If you are ill, stay way from clinics or hospitals unless you have severe symptoms, and then notify your doctor or the clinic before or as soon as you arrive so you can be appropriately isolated from others.
- **Stay informed** since this event is changing and so is the resulting guidance.
- Make preparations. If one does not have a pandemic influenza plan, then preparation check lists for a variety of settings can be found at: <a href="http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/checklists.html">http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/checklists.html</a>. These plans generally call for such measures as ensuring adequate critical supplies are on hand and preparing for higher than normal absenteeism.

## **Large Scale Vaccinations:**

#### Seasonal Influenza Vaccine

Maine CDC and the Department of Education are partnering to offer free seasonal influenza vaccine to children through interested local schools this fall. We are very appreciative to partners in health care, public health, emergency managements, and others who are reaching out to schools on these local initiatives. For more information on how you can become involved, check last week's health advisory on this subject at: <a href="http://www.maine.gov/tools/whatsnew/attach.php?id=74633&an=1">http://www.maine.gov/tools/whatsnew/attach.php?id=74633&an=1</a>

US CDC Power Point Overview of School-Based Seasonal Vaccines:

http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/infectious\_diseases/immunization/pdf/school\_flu\_clinic\_march\_2009\_vog t slides.pdf

### H1N1 Influenza Vaccine

We anticipate and are planning for H1N1 vaccine to be available this fall. We ask that health organizations, emergency management, and others start planning for this.

Planning Guidance can be found at: <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/vaccination/vax\_clinic.htm">http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/vaccination/vax\_clinic.htm</a> Updated Information on H1N1 Vaccine can be found at:

http://www.pandemicflu.gov/vaccine/index.html

# **Guidance for Certain Populations:**

What To Do If You Get Flu-Like Symptoms http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/sick.htm

Pregnant Women

http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/pregnant.htm

How to Care for A Sick Person in Your Home http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance homecare.htm

Guidance for Special Settings: Shelters (from Massachusetts)

http://www.mass.gov/Eeohhs2/docs/dph/cdc/flu/swine guidance shelters congregate facilities.pdf

Camps (from Minnesota and Massachusetts and American Camp Association)

http://health.minnesota.gov/divs/idepc/diseases/flu/h1n1/camps/index.html

http://www.mass.gov/Eeohhs2/docs/dph/cdc/flu/swine\_summer\_camp\_guidance.pdf

http://www.acacamps.org/hottopics/swine flu.php

Correctional and Detention Facilities

http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/correctional facilities.htm

Schools and Child Care Facilities

http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/K12 dismissal.htm

Workplaces and Businesses

http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/workplace.htm

Cruise Ships

http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/cruiseships.htm

# Clinical and Public Health Guidance for H1N1:

Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC) (Formerly Bureau of Health)

General Clinical Guidance <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/">http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/</a>

Screening in Areas of Few H1N1 Cases <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/screening.htm">http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/screening.htm</a>

Use of Masks and Respirators http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/masks.htm

Use of Antiviral Medications http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/recommendations.htm

Identifying and Treating Patients with H1N1 <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/identifyingpatients.htm">http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/identifyingpatients.htm</a>

Use of Pneumococcal Vaccine During H1N1 Pandemic (new, as of June 9<sup>th</sup>) <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/ppsv">http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/ppsv</a> h1n1.htm

Pregnant Women <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/clinician\_pregnant.htm">http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/clinician\_pregnant.htm</a>

HIV-Infected Patients <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance\_HIV.htm">http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance\_HIV.htm</a>